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CRYSTAL LENSES OF THE DEEP.

What painter's palette ever caught such tints,
The wondrous play of light which gleams and glints,
The myriad beauties shifting to and fro
In multicolored rays which flood and flow
Where waves their truths kaleidoscopic teach,
And laugh aloud or sing along the beach?

Soft-tinted lights, which flicker far away,
The shadow pantomimes in green and gray,
The rarest hues in grand exhaustless stores,
The mirrored pictures fringing wooded shores,
The play of surges in resistless sweep
And diapasons of the chanting deep.

How deftly weave the elves their nets of gold
With meshes draped in many a gleaming fold,
Rare silver webs in veils for naiad charms—
And water jewels for their waving arms;
All these clear water-lenses multiply
Until their splendors dazzle mind and eye.

The breakers toss joy-jewels high in air,
Rich emeralds, sapphires, pearls and diamonds rare,
With orbs of amber set in turquoise blue,
And emerald ridges flecked with every hue
That men or angels ever mined or made,
And etched in mist or with pure gold inlaid.

'Neath crystal waters, too, the glittering sands
Take forms artistic, as though sculptor's hands
Had molded them in countless rare designs
Of curve and carving on exquisite lines:
And over these heaven's light with endless change
Makes shadow pictures wonderful and strange.

At night far down each star benignly gleams,
Like angel beacon lights beheld in dreams,
And shining shafts wave brightly to and fro,
As o'er them jeweled currents come and go;
A million altars crowned with sacred flames
In that fair city man knows not nor names.

Some lights move softly, swiftly, as if gnomes
Were waving them from coral towers and domes,
In that strange city of a million fires
Which shows far down its burnished spears and spires;
And in its glow each fish which o'er it sails
A golden goblin is with jeweled scales.

O wondrous marvels, transformation scenes
In countless changeful hues of grays and greens!
Flame-tinted glories, burnished jewels rare,
The tributes paid by willing earth and air,
To prove that human art at best is naught
Compared to scenes by God and Nature wrought.

I. EDGAR JONES.

A Test of Love.

"ALBERT!"

"Umh?"

"Albert, I want to ask you something."

"Well?"

"Something—let go of my hand while I'm asking you this, because it's rather serious."

"Goodness!"

"Maybe not so serious, either, but I want you to tell me the truth."

"Haven't I been telling you the truth about everything? Didn't I own up that I used to be a little tough before I met you?"

"Indeed you did, Albert, and it was perfectly sweet of you, but this is something different. Oh, I don't know; I —I suppose I'm foolish to think about it, but something that Grace Elliott said yesterday—"

"Great Scott! I wouldn't care what she said about anything."

"I don't because I know well enough that she tattles all she konws and a good deal more; but it was the way she acted more than anything else."

"What was it all about, anyway?"

"It was about you, for one."

"Yes; Grace loves me—nit."

"It was about you and some one else."

"Who was the 'some one else?'"

"Can't you guess?"

"No. Was it you?"

"No!"

"No? Well, then, I'm not interested to hear anything about it."

"Oh, you dear thing! It was something about a girl, though—another girl."

"Which one? What's her name?"

"I should think you could guess."

"I don't see why. I don't know many girls."

"That's too bad about you. Anyway, you might try."

"Well, who was it—Rose Whiting?"

"Rose Whiting! Oh!"

"Jessie Cameron?"

"Albert Morton, you're not trying to guess. It was Fannie McClellan."

"Oh!"

"Yes, I should think it would be 'Oh.' You knew who I meant all the time."

"Who, I? Why should I?"

"Innocence! Now, Albert, stop laughing, please. I'm in earnest."

"So am I, then. What is it?"

"Well, I want to know something about her—about you and her."

"All right. Anything you want to know."

"You think I'm joking, but I'm not. I've told you things, Albert, that I never told even to my dearest girl friend, and I think you might tell me something about Fannie McClellan, because—well, after Grace left here yesterday I went up to my room and had a good cry."

"It's too bad she can't attend to her own business."

"I didn't believe what she said, but it made me—oh, she has such an aggravating way about her, and all the time she kisses you and fusses around you and pretends to be the best girl friend you ever had in the whole wide world."

"She makes me tired."

"After she'd gone away I couldn't remember that she'd said anything in just so many words, but she kept hinting around and acting as if she knew a lot more than she cared to tell."

"Don't you remember anything she said?"

"Well, it was about you and—Fannie McClellan. You did go with her for awhile, didn't you, Albert?"

"Yes. I used to take her to places once in awhile. You know that. Why, I was with her the first time I ever met you—that night at the Carleton club."

"Yes, and when we were sitting over in the corner she looked as if she'd like to bite my head off. Was that the last time you ever went with her?"

"I don't remember. I may have gone with her once or twice after that."

"You must have gone with her a good many times altogether, counting when you called and all that."

"Yes, I saw her occasionally, now and then, for a year or so before I met you."

"If that—then you must have liked her better than you did the other girls."

"It's only natural that I should like her better than I did some girls, and then there were other girls that I liked about as well as I did her."

"But you went to see her oftener than you did any other girl, now, didn't you? Tell me, Albert, please. It's all past now and it doesn't make a particle of difference what happened, or whether you went to see her every night, only—"

"Only what? If it doesn't make any difference, what's all this excitement about?"

"Now, don't get mad, Albert."

"I'm not mad."

"Really?"

"No! Pshaw!"

"Why, can't you see that if we are going to be together all of our lives, Albert, I ought to know about these things, so that if anyone like Grace Elliott comes around dropping her hints and saying these things I can—"

"Now, just one moment, Lil. Let's understand this whole business. What was it Grace Elliott said?"

"As I tell you, she didn't say it in so many words, but you could see what she meant."

"All right, then. What did she mean?"

"Albert, you won't scold?"

"No; go ahead."

"Oh, I'm sorry I ever spoke of it at all."

"I wish I knew what 'it' was."

"Well, I want you to know, Albert, that I realize perfectly well that anyone can go and see a girl once in awhile, and even take her to parties, without being engaged or anything like that, and I wouldn't have brought this up at all only that Grace—"

"Oh, darn Grace!"

"Albert!"

"She won't be a bridesmaid, do you understand? She won't be anything."

"Albert! Honestly, Grace didn't actually say anything right out, but I simply felt that she meant something. Now—ah—Albert, you've told me that you never were engaged before, and I know that, but—well, you weren't were you?"

"I were not."

"Oh, Albert, I'm in earnest."

"So am I."

"And you never asked anyone?"

"Certainly not!"

"I might have known that. She'd have grabbed you quick enough. If I don't give Grace Elliott a piece of my mind when she comes around here again."

"I wouldn't pay any attention to anything she says."

"I don't, but she has such a crawly, tantalizing way of saying things about people she knows you like. Albert, do you ever see Fannie McClellan any more?"

"I just see her once in awhile and that's all."

"You are—are friends at least?"

"I suppose so."

"You've never had a quarrel or anything like that?"

"Oh, no."

"Then I don't see why you shouldn't be friends. She's a sweet, lovely girl, and I know she was very fond of you, and may be yet, for all I know, and I think it would be awfully mean of you not to treat her just as beautifully as you could. I'm going to invite her to the wedding. Do you think she'll come?"

"I don't know, I'm sure."

"There's no reason why she shouldn't come?"

"None that I know of."

"Well, I'm going to invite her, and then—I want you to promise me something, Albert."

"I promise. What is it?"

"Well—after we're married I want you to promise to let me invite Fannie to come and call on us. I want to show her that you and I—both of us—like her just the same as if—well, as if nothing had ever happened."

"Maybe she wouldn't enjoy coming."

"Why not? You don't mean that she might be jealous? Why, you conceited thing!"

"It isn't that. You don't know her very well, do you?"

"But you do, and I want all of your friends to be my friends, and you know you've promised to like all of my friends."

"All right, then. We'll have Fannie to dinner as soon as we're settled."

"Do you mean it?"

"Of course."

"It will please her so much."

"Yes?"

(Snuggling.) "And you're the kindest, best-hearted thing that ever lived."—Chicago Record.

What Is a Signature?

When Constable was requested to put his signature to one of his pictures he answered: "Why, my dear sir, it is signed all over." Let the preacher preserve his personality and his sermon also will be "signed all over." A number of Thackeray's pen-and-ink sketches were sold not long since in London, and, although they bore no monogram or signature, no one disputed their genuineness. A true preacher also cannot be hid. That which John had seen and with his own hands handled of the world of life could never be to any other person just what it was to him. A preacher who puts himself into his sermons is as readily detected in his sermon as anywhere else. Even his apprehension of truth, his way of looking at it, his fashion of delivering it, is all his own. Let us repeat it: His sermon will be "signed all over."—Homiletic Review.

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS.

There are 47 Chinese temples in the United States.

During the siege of Paris butter was sold at $10 a pound.

Three thousand marriages are performed every day all over the world.

There are 672 known volcanoes in the world, of which 270 are active.

A speck of gold weighing less than one-millionth part of a grain can be seen with the naked eye.

The heart beates ten strokes a minute less when one is lying down than when in an upright posture.

Emperor Charles V. carried a watch in 1530 that weighed 27 pounds. In such a case it is proper to say only "carried;" such a watch is never "worn."

Most Chinese mandarins pass the whole of their lives without taking a single yard of exercise. Under no circumstances whatever is a mandarin ever seen on foot in his own jurisdiction.

A woman without arms has been married at Christ church, New Zealand. The ring was placed upon the fourth toe of her left foot. A similar marriage to this was performed at St. James' church, Bury St. Edmund's, in 1832. The ring was placed on one of the bride's toes, between which she grasped a pen and signed the marriage register.

BROWN'S BLACK EYE.

He Tells a Story About It That Is Certainly Original If Not Reliable.

Brown is going around with a variegated eye. This is the story that he is telling his friends:

"It was such a petty thing that the more I thought of it the madder I got.

"The milkman leaves my milk before the sun is up; it is somewhat later when I feel called upon to leave my bed, and during the time that the milk remains on the back porch some one has been making it a practice to steal it. It is more than provoking to find, when breakfast is ready, that you have no milk for your coffee.

"I set all manner of traps to catch the thief without success. Then I hired one of the neighbor's boys to sit up and keep watch. But the next morning I found the milk gone and the boy asleep.

"The other morning I chanced to be awake just before sunrise, and I heard some one fumbling with the milk can on the back porch. Hastily throwing on my dressing gown, I stepped softly to the door and threw it open suddenly.

"In the dim light I could see a man bending over the can, and, without stopping to see if he was a bigger man than I, I sprang at him with blood in my eye. The shock threw him off the porch, and we rolled down the steps together, fighting like a couple of wildcats.

"We must have made an awful racket, for I heard the windows going up all around me, and some one was blowing a police whistle, while my wife was wringing her hands upon the porch.

"I got my man down at last and sat upon him. We were both a sight, being covered with milk from head to foot.

"It had grown a little lighter by this time, and my wife, taking in the situation, gasped:

"'John, that's the milkman that you are sitting on!'

"It was, for a fact, and explanations were in order.

"I understand that the milkman is going around exhibiting his wounds and saying that I made a brutal and cowardly attack upon a defenseless man, and increasing the amount of damages he is going to sue me for at every telling.

"Meanwhile, some one is stealing my milk."—Detroit Free Press.

JEWELED IN BARBARIC STYLE.

Chains, Buckles, Bracelets and Earrings Worn in Profusion Nowadays.

Gems and trinkets are more in evidence at present than for many seasons past. Indeed, this species of decoration has reached such a pitch that in order to be strictly fashionable the up-to-date girl must load herself in a way suggestive of oriental stones, and of all ornaments none for evening wear is regarded as more essential than a diamond aigrette for the hair. The wing pattern appears to be the favorite just now, though sprays of flowers are also greatly in vogue. The bowknot, so popular in embroidery and applique work, makes a pretty diamond ornament for the hair. Side combs are more jeweled than ever, the latest design consisting of diamond walls of Troy on the edge of the comb. Both bracelets and earrings being again in favor many handsome and novel specimens of this sort are to be seen. Turquoises, diamonds and pearls, either singly or combined, are the stones most used for bracelets and earrings.

The latest novelty in corsage decoration is a smaller chain of gold, so much shorter than that which we have been wearing that it only reaches the decolletage, and to which is attached a round empire ornament in filigree. Buckles increase in size and costliness and are much worn on all varieties of gowns. Buttons really come under the head of jewelry nowadays. A big consideration in trinkets nowadays is the jeweled muff chain. A novelty in these is one entirely of jewels set transparently in invisible frames. Of all chatelaine developments that the world has seen since chatelaines became fashionable the most elaborate consists of a gold rope cord suspended from the waist, to which is attached a finely latticed gold webbing dotted all over with small diamonds, while at the opening of the small sack is a spray of flowers in diamonds and pearls.—Chicago Chronicle.

HUMOR IN SMALL "ADS."

Some Funny Things Are Found in the "For Sale or Exchange" Column.

There is more than one way of getting rid of some article you don't want and getting hold of something you really need, or think you need, which is the same thing. If a man owns a dog and hankers for a watch, he doesn't have to sell the animal and then use that money in purchasing the timepiece. That was the way it was done years ago, but the "For Sale or Exchange" column in the Sunday newspapers have changed the method of operation. Pianos are exchanged for sealskins and jewelry. Books are taken in trade for silverware for the table and harnesses. Sign painting goes for clothes, and stenography for bicycles. One young woman advertises: "First-class teacher, with best of references, will give stage or society dancing lessons for dry goods, shoes or anything useful." Another person says: "Opals or amethysts for silverware, typewriter or hardware." A laundress who wants to learn to play the piano says: "Wanted—Piano lessons in exchange for laundry work, or what have you?"

Apparently many of these traders are willing to take nearly anything of value, and, of course, each one expects to get the best of the bargain. There must often be heart-burnings and many sad words when the man who has traded an Angora cat for dental work finds that his teeth have been filled with plumbers' solder, or the woman who has exchanged a Persian rug for an alarm clock discovers that the timepiece runs only on Thursday afternoons, and then strikes nothing but 33.

One enterprising individual advertises: "Best French conversation in exchange for cash or solid goods." It may be said that there are many persons who would also like to trade large bunches of "best English conversation" for cheese sandwiches or an old pair of pants.

A family with lots of board, but a houseful of leaky pipes, wants to "exchange good board for plumbing; walking distance." and a man with a large wardrobe but nothing to hunt with wants "up-to-date gun for winter suit, No. 42." A hotel man will "give interest in the business for use of furniture for 15 rooms," while a man on the South side would like to exchange dentistry for housework.

One advertisement which is slightly ambiguous reads: "Wanted—Lady for light housekeeping in exchange for good home," and a "competent stenographer" desires to exchange her services for board and room, while still a third says: "Bookkeeper's desk, show case and gun for tailoring or any old thing."—Chicago Inter Ocean.

THE ALASKAN VESUVIUS.

The Glare from the Spouting Lava Turns Night Into Day—Not Yet Named.

Further infomation of the active volcano discovered in the Atlin gold district in British Columbia is to the effect that the volcano furnishes the miners a light by which to work their claims during the long darkness of the Arctic winter. The glare from the spouting lava, reflected back against the sky, gives an almost continuous twilight to the upper end of the Atlin district.

All the passengers of the steamer Cottage City, arriving from Alaska have stories to tell of the volcano, but from Dr. W. B. Kinsloe and T. H. James, mining men of Denver, who have been making an examination of the Atlin country, comes the best and apparently most authentic description of the Alaskan Vesuvius.

"The mountain in eruption," said Dr. Kinsloe, "is the second in a range of four towering peaks lying about 50 miles due south of Lake Gladies and a slightly shorter distance from Atlin City. These mountains are of at least 14,000 feet altitude, the crater resting slightly below its three brother peaks.

"It was in the early part of October that the smoke was first seen issuing from the mountain. With the thought of a volcano furthest from their minds, the miners attributed these first signs of an eruption to clouds hanging about the peak. So constant, however, was the cloud that it became an object of daily observation from Atlin City. Then, on November 8, the mountain burst forth in flames. Through the smoke cloud there shot a stream of molten lava, bowlders and ashes that brightened the sky for a radius of nearly 40 miles and sent its reflected light through the darkness down upon the men working on Birch, Discovery, McKee, Pine and other creeks, the sides of whose banks face towards the volcano.

"A panic ensued among the miners when the ashes began falling down upon them.

"The ashes fell to a depth of several inches and the stream down the mountain side increased in magnitude. The fall of ashes later stopped and the men returned to work.

"When we left the miners were working nights, gladly profiting by the mellow twilight caused by the volcano's glare, which turned night into day.

"No name has as yet been given to the mountain, but when we left, the Canadian officials at Atlin were preparing for an expedition to the volcano and will undoubtedly christen it."—St. Louis Republic.

A Bright Stove Blacking.

Finely powder half a pound of ordinary blacklead, sift it and mix with the whites of three eggs, well beaten. Dilute these ingredients with sour beer until a thin liquid, like French leather polish, is obtained, and set it over a hot fire to simmer for about a quarter of an hour. When cold the blacking will be quite ready for use.—Cincinnati Commercial Tribune.

AS THE YEARS GO BY

Dr. Talmage Preaches a Sermon Suitable to New Year's.

He Proposes a New Way of Measuring Earthly Existence—From the Text "How Old Art Thou."

Washington, -(Copyright,

Appropriate to the exit of one year and the entrance of another year are the practical suggestions which Dr. Talmage puts in this discourse, which propose a different mode of measuring time from that ordinarily employed; text, Genesis 47:8: "How old art thou?"

The Egyptian capital was the focus of the world's wealth. In ships and barges there had been brought to it from India frankincense and cinnamon and ivory and diamonds; from the north marble and iron; from Syria, purple and silk; from Greece, some of the finest horses of the world and some of the most brilliant chariots, and from all the earth that which could best please the eye and charm the ear and gratify the taste. There were temples aflame with red sandstone, entered by the gateways that were guarded by pillars bewildering with hieroglyphics and wound with brazen serpents and adorned with winged creatures—their eyes and beaks and pinions glittering with precious stones. There were marble columns blooming into white flower beds. There were stone pillars, at the top bursting into the shape of the lotus when in full bloom.

Along the avenues, lined with sphinx and fane and obelisk there were princes who came in gorgeously upholstered palanquins, carried by servants in scarlet or elsewhere drawn by vehicles, the snow white horses, golden bitted and six abreast, dashing at full run. On the floors of mosaic the glories of Pharaoh were spelled out in letters of porphyry and beryl and flame. There were ornaments twisted from the wood of tamarisk, embossed with silver breaking into foam. There were footstools made out of a single precious stone. There were beds fashioned out of a crouched lion in bronze. There were chairs spotted with the sleek hides of leopards. There were sofas footed with the claws of wild beasts and armed with the beaks of birds. As you stand on the level beach of the sea on a summer day and look either way, and there are miles of breakers, white with the ocean foam, dashing shoreward, so it seemed as if the sea of the world's pomp and wealth in the Egyptian capital for miles and miles flung itself up into white breakers of marble temple, mausoleum and obelisk.

It was to this capital and the palace of Pharaoh that Jacob, the plain shepherd, came to meet his son Joseph, who had become prime minister, in the royal apartment. Pharaoh and Jacob met, dignity and rusticity, the gracefulness of the court and the plain manners of the field. The king, wanting to make the old countryman at ease and seeing how white his beard is and how feeble his step, looks familiarly into his face and says to the aged man: "How old art thou?"

Last night the gate of eternity opened to let in, amid the great throng of departed centuries, the soul of the dying year. Under the twelfth stroke of the brazen hammer of the city clock the patriarch fell dead, and the stars of the night were the funeral torches. It is most fortunate that on this road of life there are so many milestones, on which we can read just how fast we are going toward the journey's end. I feel that it is not an inappropriate question that I ask to-day when I look into your faces and say, as Pharaoh did to Jacob, the patriarch: "How old art thou?"

People who are truthful on every other subject lie about their ages, so that I do not solicit from you any literal response to the question I have asked. I would put no one under temptation; but I simply want this morning to see by what rod it is we are measuring our earthly existence. There is a right way and a wrong way of measuring our earthly existence. There is a right way and a wrong way of measuring a door, or a wall, or an arch, or a tower, and so there is a right way and a wrong way of measuring our earthly existence. It is with reference to this higher meaning that I confront you this morning with the stupendous question of the text, and ask: "How old art thou?"

Again, I remark that there are many who estimate their life on earth by their sorrows and misfortunes. Through a great many of your lives the plowshare hath gone very deep, turning up a terrible furrow. You have been betrayed and misrepresented and set upon and slapped of impertinence and pounded of misfortune. The brightest life must have its shadows and the smoothest path its thorns. On the happiest brood the hawk pounces. No escape from trouble of some kind. While glorious John Milton was losing his eyesight he heard that Salmasius was glad of it. While Sheridan's comedy was being enacted in Drury Lane theater, London, his enemy sat growling at it in the stage box. While Bishop Cooper was surrounded by the favor of learned men, his wife took his lexicon manuscript, the result of a long life of anxiety and toil, and threw it into the fire. Misfortune, trial, vexation for almost everyone. Pope, applauded of all the world, has a stoop in the shoulder that annoys him so much that he has a tunnel dug so that he may go unobserved from garden to grotto and from grotto to garden. Cano, the famous Spanish artist, is disgusted with the crucifix that the priest holds before him because it is such a poor specimen of sculpture. And so, sometimes through taste and sometimes through learned menace and sometimes through physical distresses —aye, in 10,000 ways—troubles come to harass and annoy.

And yet it is unfair to measure a man's life by his misfortunes, because where there is one stalk of nightshade there are 50 marigolds and harebells; where there is one cloud thunder charged there are hundreds that stray across the heavens, the glory of land and sky asleep in their bosom. Because death came and took your child away, did you immediately forget all the five years, or the ten years, or the 15 years, in which she came every night for a kiss, all the tones of your heart pealing forth at the sound of her voice or the soft touch of her hand? Because in some financial Euroclydon your fortune went into the breakers, did you forget all those years in which the luxuries and extravagances of life showered on your path? Alas, that is an unwise man, an ungrateful man, an unfair man, an unphilosophic man, and, most of all, an un-Christian man, who measures his life on earth by groans and tears and dyspeptic fit and abuse and scorn and terror and neuralgic thrust.

Again, I remark that there are many people who estimate their life on earth by the amount of money they have accumulated. They say: "The year 1866, or 1870, or 1898, was wasted." Why? "Made no money." Now it is all cant and insincerity to talk against money, as though it had no value. It may represent refinement and education and 10,000 blessed surroundings. It is the spreading of the table that feeds the children's hunger. It is the lighting of the furnace that keeps you warm. It is the making of the bed on which you rest from care and anxiety It is the carrying of you out at last to decent sepulcher and the putting up of the slab on which is chiseled the story of your Christian hope. It is simply hypocrisy, this tirade in pulpit and lecture hall against money.

But while all this is so, he who uses money or thinks of money as anything but a means to an end will find out his mistake when the glittering treasures slip out of his nerveless grasp and he goes out of this world without a shilling of money or a certificate of stock. He might better have been the Christian porter that opened his gate, or the begrimed workman who last night heaved the coal into his cellar. Bonds and mortgages and leases have their use, but they make a poor yardstick with which to measure life. "They that boast themselves in their wealth and trust in the multitude of their riches, none of them can, by any means, redeem his brother or give to God a ransom for him that he should not see corruption."

But I remark there are many—I wish there were more—who estimate their life by the moral and spiritual development.

I remark again, there are many—and I wish there were more—who are estimating life by the good they can do. John Bradford said he counted that day nothing at all in which he had not, by pen or tongue, done some good. If a man begin right, I cannot tell how many tears he may wipe away, how many burdens he may lift, how many orphans he may comfort, how many outcasts he may reclaim. There have been men who have given their whole life in the right direction, concentrating all their wit and ingenuity and mental acumen and physical force and enthusiasm for Christ. They climbed the mountain and delved into the mine and crossed the sea and dropped at last into martyrs' graves waiting for the resurrection of the just. They measured their lives by the chains they broke off, by the garments they put upon nakedness, by the miles they traveled to alleviate every kind of suffering. They felt in the thrill of every nerve, in the motion of every muscle, in every throb of their heart, in every respiration of their lungs the magnificent truth. "No man liveth unto himself." They went through cold and through heat, foot blistered, cheek smitten, back scourged, tempest lashed, to do their whole duty. That is the way they measured life—by the amount of good they could do.

Do you want to know how old Luther was; how old Richard Baxter was; how old Philip Doddridge was? Why, you cannot calculate the length of their lives by any human arithmetic! Add to their lives 10,000 times 10,000 years and you have not expressed it—what they have lived or will live. Oh, what a standard that is to measure a man's life by! There are those in this house who think they have only lived 30 years. They will have lived 1,000—they have lived 1,000. There are those who think they are 80 years of age. They have not even entered upon their infancy, for one must become a babe in Christ to begin at all.

Now, I do not know what your advantages or disadvantages are; I do not know what your tact or talent is; I do not know what may be the fascination of your manners or the repulsiveness of them; but I know this—there is for you, my hearer, a field to culture, a harvest to reap, a tear to wipe away, a soul to save. If you have worldly means, consecrate them to Christ. If you have eloquence, use it on the side that Paul and Wilberforce used theirs. If you have learning, put it all into the poor box of the world's suffering. But if you have none of these—neither wealth, nor eloquence, nor learning—you, at any rate, have a smile with which you can encourage the disheartened; a frown with which you may blast injustice; a voice with which you may call the wanderer back to God. "Oh," you say, "that is a very sanctimonious view of life!" It is not. It is the only bright view of life, and it is the only bright view of death. Contrast the death scene of a man who has measured life by the worldly standard with the death scene of a man who has measured life by the Christian standard. Quin, the actor, in his last moments, said: "I hope this tragic scene will soon be over, and I hope to keep my dignity to the last. Malesherbes said in his last moments to the confessor: "Hold your tongue! Your miserable style puts me out of conceit with Heaven." Lord Chesterfield in his last moments, when he ought to have been praying for his soul, bothered himself about the proprieties of the sickroom and said: "Give Dayboles a chair." Godfrey Kneller spent his last hours on earth in drawing a diagram of his own monument.

Compare the silly and horrible departure of such men with the seraphic glow on the face of Edward Payson, as he said in his last moment: "The breezes of Heaven fan me. I float in a sea of glory." Or with Paul, the apostle, who said in his last hour: "I am now ready to be offered up, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me." Or compare it with the Christian deathbed that you witnessed in your own household. Oh, my friends, this world is a false god! It will consume you with the blaze in which it accepts your sacrifice, while the righteous shall be held in everlasting remembrance, and when the thrones have fallen and the monuments have crumbled and the world has perished they shall banquet with the conquerors of earth and the hierarchs of Heaven.

This is a good day in which to begin a new style of measurement. How old art thou? You see the Christian way of measuring life and the worldly way of measuring it. I leave it to you to say which is the wisest and best way. The wheel of time has turned very swiftly, and it has hurled us on. The old year has gone. The new year has come. For what you and I have been launched upon it God only knows. Now let me ask you all, have you made any preparation for the future? You have made preparation for time, my dear brother; have you made any preparation for eternity? Do you wonder that when that man on the Hudson river, in indignation tore up the tract which was handed to him and just one word landed on his coat sleeve—the rest of the tract being pitched into the river—that one word aroused his soul? It was that one word, so long, so broad, so high, so deep—"eternity!" A dying woman in her last moments said: "Call it back." They said: "What do you want?" "Time," she said; "call it back!" Oh, it cannot be called back! We might lose our fortunes and call them back, we might lose our health and perhaps recover it, we might lose our good name and get that back, but time gone is gone forever.

Some of you during the past year made preparation for eternity, and it makes no difference to you really, as to the matter of safety, whether you go now or go some other year—whether this year or the next year. Both your feet on the rock, the waves may dash around you. You can say: "God is our refuge and strength—a very present help." You are on the rock, and you may defy all earth and hell to overthrow you. I congratulate you. I give you great joy. It is a happy new year to you.

I can see no sorrow at all in the fact that our years are going. You hear some people say: "I wish I could go back again to boyhood." I would not want to go back again to boyhood. I am afraid I might make a worse life out of it than I have made. You could not afford to go back to boyhood if it were possible. You might do a great deal worse than you have done. The past is gone! Look out for the future! To all Christians it is a time of gladness. I am glad the years are going. You are coming on nearer home. Let your countenance light up with the thought. Nearer home!

Now, when one can sooner get to the center of things, is he not to be congratulated? Who wants to be always in the freshman class? We study God in this world by the Biblical photograph of Him; but we all know we can in five minutes of interview with a friend get a more accurate idea of Him than we can by studying Him 50 years through pictures or words. The little child that died at six months of age knows more of God than all Andover and all Princeton and all New Brunswick.

Does not our common sense teach us that it is better to be at the center than to be clear out on the rim of the wheel, holding nervously fast to the tire lest we be suddenly hurled ino light and eternal felicity? Through all kinds of optical instruments trying to peer in through the cracks and the keyholes of Heaven—afraid that both doors of the celestial mansion will be swung wide open before our entranced vision—rushing about among the apothecary shops of this world, wondering if this is good for rheumatism, and that is good for neuralgia, and something else is good for a bad cough, lest we be suddenly ushered into a land of everlasting health where the inhabitant never says: "I am sick."

In 1835 the French resolved that at Ghent they would have a kind of musical demonstration that had never been heard of. It would be made up of the chimes of bells and the discharge of cannon. The experiment was a perfect success. What with the ringing of the bells and the report of the ordnance, the city trembled, and the hills shook with the triumphal march that was as strange as it was overwhelming. With a most glorious accompaniment will God's dear children go into their high residence when the trumpets shall sound and the last day has come. At the signal given, the bells of the towers, and of the lighthouses, and of the cities will strike their sweetness into a last chime that shall ring into the heavens and float off upon the sea, joined by the boom of bursting mine and magazine, augmented by all the cathedral towers of Heaven—the harmonies of earth and the symphonies of the celestial realm making up one great triumphal march, fit to celebrate the ascent of the redeemed to where they shall shine as the stars forever and ever.